

“well qualified” by the American Bar Association—the highest rating possible. By any measure, he is exactly the type of fairminded, consensus nominee the Senate should be considering for the vacancy. But Judge Garland can’t make his case to the American people because Senator GRASSLEY refuses to even hold a hearing on the nomination. Chairman GRASSLEY has come up with a myriad of excuses to block the nomination, none of which hold water. As the Des Moines Register said recently, “Grassley’s excuses are purely political.”

Iowans aren’t being fooled. They know that the chairman’s real goal is holding the Supreme Court open for Donald Trump to do with what he wants. The Judiciary chairman has already said Trump would “appoint the right type of people”—boy, I will tell you, that must be a real stretch—“the right type of people” to the Supreme Court. The senior Senator from Iowa obviously places a high value on Trump’s judgment, which has proven to be so good the last year. Senator GRASSLEY is holding a Supreme Court vacancy for a man who accused an Indiana-born judge of being unable to do his job because of his racial heritage. His parents came from Mexico. Apparently he would like to see that brand of thinking brought to the Nation’s courts.

It is time for Senator GRASSLEY to stop playing politics with his committee and give Judge Garland a fair hearing. It is time for his committee to address the numerous lower court vacancies and damaging judicial emergencies throughout the country. The American people deserve a functioning judicial system led by the Judiciary Committee in the Senate. They have had enough with Republican excuses. Iowans and the Nation are waiting. It is time for Senator GRASSLEY and Senate Republicans to do their job.

Mr. President, I would ask the Chair to announce what the Senate is going to do the rest of the day.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### COMPREHENSIVE ADDICTION AND RECOVERY ACT OF 2016—CONFERENCE REPORT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the conference report to accompany S. 524, which the clerk will report.

The assistant bill clerk read as follows:

Conference report to accompany S. 524, a bill to authorize the Attorney General to award grants to address the national epidemics of prescription opioid abuse and heroin use.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 11

a.m. will be equally divided between the two leaders or their designees.

The Senator from Illinois.

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, pending before the Senate is an important bill. It is a bill that relates to the opioid epidemic in America—an epidemic which is linked directly to the heroin epidemic in America and the sad reality of the deaths that are occasioned by heroin overdoses.

The prescription opioid and heroin epidemic claimed 28,647 American lives in 2014—1,652 in my State of Illinois. That is a 30-percent increase in just 4 years.

I have seen this devastation firsthand. I have sat with parents who have lost their kids. I have met with young teenagers who were addicted. Thank goodness that some of them have been able—with treatment, counseling, and strength—to fight off that addiction.

The reality is obvious. This narcotics epidemic is not an inner city problem. It is an American problem. It is a problem that not only touches the inner cities of America, but it also touches every other community. There is no town too small, no suburb too wealthy to escape the opioid and heroin epidemic.

I have been across my State, from one end to the other, at roundtables with law enforcement, with medical professionals, with those who do addiction treatment and with those who have lived through these addictions. I have seen firsthand what it has done to communities and families and lives. We need a forceful response, and we are going to vote on one in about an hour. It is called the CARA bill. It is a bill that moves us in the right direction when it comes to dealing with this addiction.

The conference report has many important elements to it, and that is why I am going to support it. It includes my proposal to require reforms at the FDA, or the Food and Drug Administration, to ensure better oversight of dangerous and addictive opioid drugs before they are approved for sale in our country. My provisions will ensure the FDA convenes scientific advisory committees before approving new opioid drugs and that the Pediatric Advisory Committee has a voice in the decision.

We require the FDA to consider the public health impacts before allowing more addictive products to come onto the market. We direct Federal health agencies to develop plans for continuing medical education with doctors and other providers who prescribe opioids. We require the FDA to encourage drug companies to make abuse-deterrent formulations of these dangerous drugs.

The CARA conference report also includes a proposal I have worked on to improve State prescription drug monitoring programs. This legislation will make it easier for States to share information about overprescribing and overusing opioids, it gives doctors more information to better perform their prescribing practices.

I am pleased the CARA conference report includes new grant programs to expand access to naloxone—the life-saving anecdote—to promote treatment alternatives instead of arrests for those suffering from addiction and to create flexibility and treatment options for those who need medication-assisted therapy or pregnant women who need specialized care.

Having said all of these positive things about what we are to vote on, let me state the obvious. When only 12 percent of the people in Illinois are able to receive care for their addiction, and there is a 12-week wait at facilities for vulnerable patients to get into drug treatment, authorizing new programs, which this bill does, is good but not good enough. We need to make an investment. We need to put taxpayers’ dollars behind this commitment to end this epidemic, and it is needed now.

That is why Senator JEANNE SHAHEEN of New Hampshire offered an amendment during the Senate floor consideration of this bill. Her amendment would have put \$600 million into actually making the bill work, enforcing it, investing in it. It failed.

During the CARA conference meetings, Senator MURRAY and Congressman PALLONE offered amendments to ensure that Congress would put some money into the promise of this bill. They couldn’t get it passed in a conference dominated by the Republican majority. Why? Why would these efforts be blocked when the Republicans are joining us and saying this is a national problem that deserves our immediate attention? Because Republicans have said they have already proposed to increase funding in appropriation bills to take care of this. Yet many Republicans are supporting a continuing resolution that freezes funding at this year’s level and provides for no increase in opioid epidemic treatment. When they say they are going to put more money in and then call for a continuing resolution, they know and we know that it is a sham.

The Republicans are opposing an increase in funding for this bill by saying they already proposed increased funding in another bill, but at the same time they are advocating a freeze, or flat-funding a continuing resolution. They can’t have it both ways.

It is confusing, but those of us who live in this world know what they are up to. They want to take the credit for passing this bill and the promise of funding it in the future into the election in November but not provide the money that is needed to make it work. That is playing games with people’s lives. America deserves better.

Failing to provide the dollars today is not going to help those who are currently suffering. It is not going to help that mother who was awake all last night worrying about a son or a daughter who is facing an addiction, praying they can get that child they love into treatment in time to break that addiction and save their lives.